



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Communities, State Request Feedback on “*The Grand Strategy*”

KENT COUNTY, MI – Kent County, the City of Grand Rapids, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc., and several other local units of government are working with the Michigan Department of Economic Development (MEDC) to develop ***The Grand Strategy***. These innovative resiliency plans and projects are designed to make the region strong enough to withstand disasters. Kent County, through the State of Michigan, was invited to compete for grants through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s National Disaster Resilience Plan.

After Superstorm Sandy, Congress set aside about \$1 billion as part of a national program to create resilient communities – to help them bounce back quicker from unpredictable, natural events like tornadoes, floods, or drought. Michigan is one of 40 states and communities competing in this highly competitive grant program. Communities qualified as a result of the 2013 Flood that caused significant damage throughout Kent County: Ada, Cascade, Plainfield Township, and the Cities of Grand Rapids, Walker, and Wyoming. These communities along the Grand River collaborated in recent months to submit their projects through the MEDC, which would act as fiduciary of the funding.

Two public meetings are scheduled to give participants an opportunity to view the draft proposal and submit comments:

October 20, 2015 - 5:30 p.m. DeVos Place Convention Center Chase Boardroom (2nd Floor) 303 Monroe NW Grand Rapids, MI 49503	October 20, 2015 - 7 p.m. Plainfield Charter Township Hall 6161 Belmont NE Belmont, MI 49306
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The regional plan includes approximately two dozen initiatives. Objectives include but are not limited to:

- Transforming the urban waterway and waterfront in Downtown Grand Rapids.
 - Converting multiple urban core riverfront opportunity sites from a gray-to-green flood protection system that expands public parks, trails and recreation opportunities.
 - Remove 5 obsolete dams and restore the rapids in the Grand River in Downtown GR.
 - Ensuring that Grand Rapids’ urban core secures “sound reach” flood protection designation by the Federal Emergency Management Association.
- Enhance flood retention on 1,500+ acres of land.
- Build 160 miles of green streets.
- Restore 92 acres of wetlands.
- Rehabilitate 25 miles of streams and drains.



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The estimated total cost to implement *The Grand Strategy* is approximately \$350 million, of which partners will request approximately \$230 million in federal funds.

[More details on the draft proposal are available here.](#) Those unable to attend the meetings can send comments to CDBG@michigan.org by October 20th. The MEDC's deadline to submit the proposal is October 27, 2015. The decision on funding should occur in the first quarter of 2016.

MEDIA NOTE: Several key members of *The Grand Strategy* team will be at both meetings. Feel free to contact Lisa or Steve at the emails above if you would like to schedule an interview.

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